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Combined second and third periodic reports of States parties

Uzbekistan*

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National Centre for Human Rights of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Second periodic report of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Tashkent — 2004

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Non-governmental and non-commercial organizations:

12. **Women's Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan**
13. **Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan**
14. **Centre for the Study of Public Opinion *Ijtimoii fikr***
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Introduction

The accession of the Republic of Uzbekistan to more than 60 international treaties on human rights entailed establishing an organizational and legal mechanism for implementing international obligations and legislative acts adopted on their basis, as well as establishing a system of continuous monitoring to ensure their observance, both in the centre and in the regions of the country.

The Republic of Uzbekistan became a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 6 May 1995. The Government of Uzbekistan began to undertake important work for the protection of women's rights and the securing of their full-fledged participation in the socio-political, socio-economic and cultural life of the country. The initial report of the Republic of Uzbekistan concerning the implementation of the basic provisions of the Convention was considered in the course of the Committee's twenty-fourth session (CEDAW/C/UZB/1) at its 500th, 501st and 507th meetings on 25 and 30 January 2001 (CEDAW/C/SR.500, SR.501 and SR.507).

Work has continued in the light of the consideration of the initial report and the recommendations made by the Committee including the work of publicizing the recommendations.

In the State programme of measures for safeguarding the interests of women (1999), a system was elaborated and set up for monitoring the implementation of international instruments that protect the interests of women, mothers and children.

The adoption and implementation of the following measures marked an important step: the Additional Allowances for Women Act of the Republic of Uzbekistan; the State Programme of measures for strengthening the role of women in the family and in the development of the State and society, and for improving the system of protecting their legal, social, economic and spiritual interests, adopted in connection with the celebration of Women's Year in 1999; the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on additional measures for strengthening the social protection of women; and a number of other regulatory acts.

At the same time, the analysis undertaken indicates that there are individual shortcomings and unused capacity in the work of the women's committees, public organizations and State bodies for protection of the economic, social and political interests of women and enhancement of their role in the family, social life and development of the State.

Both in the centre and in rural areas, women's committees are frequently regarded as State organs, financed largely through budgetary funds and using bureaucratic methods in their activities.

The majority of those active on the women's committees, selected for various leadership positions, have found themselves cut off from the grass-roots women's collectives and see themselves not as representatives of women and of female society but as government officials.

Democratic forums for working with women such as congresses and conferences — which are an effective means of identifying women's real interests and problems, opinions and proposals on various issues regarding women's

advancement, social development and stimulation of grass-roots initiative — have hardly begun to function.

The staff of the women's committees are hardly accountable to society and local women's organizations.

The women's committees do not have an adequate relationship with the mass media. Questions as to what topics and problems are featured in the press and women's publications and what impact these have on readers, especially young women, are not considered by the committees.

A significant proportion of women, particularly in rural areas, remain outside the purview of the women's committees; they are left to themselves and fall prey to various trends, including destructive forces.

In the spiritual and moral upbringing of women and the solution of their day-to-day problems, no use is made of the potential of women members of the *makhallyas* and of citizens' assemblies, particularly women wielding authority among the population who are well versed in national and religious traditions and customs and who are in charge of performing traditional rites and rituals. While all manner of help is provided to these women, their active involvement in implementing measures undertaken by the *khokimiyat* and the *makhallya* committees and their incorporation into the leadership of citizens' assemblies would greatly improve the work with women and youth.

In this connection, and also to further enhance the socio-political activities of women, to strengthen their position and role in the family and society and to fulfil the tasks of building the State in full accord with the democratic transformations taking place in the country, a Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on additional measures to support the activities of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan was issued on 25 May 2004, prescribing the following tasks and directions of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan:

- To elaborate and implement practical measures for the realization of a country-wide policy to give social and legal support to women, protect motherhood and childhood, support the professional, physical, spiritual and intellectual growth of women, and increase their socio-political activities and their active participation in building the State;
- To elaborate and implement comprehensive measures for safeguarding the health of women, bringing up a healthy family and fostering the development of female and family sports and a healthy way of life;
- To prepare and implement programmes aimed at resolving issues pertaining to women's employment, ameliorating their conditions of work and study, particularly in rural areas, and involving them in entrepreneurial activities;
- To organize effective activities in rural areas (within the family, *makhallyas*, workers' collectives and institutions of learning) for teaching and observing the country's religious traditions, promoting and protecting women's constitutional rights, and effectively resisting attempts by destructive forces to affect women's awareness and to involve them in extremist and terrorist activities;

– To ensure effective coordination and cooperation with women's non-governmental and non-commercial organizations and to mobilize their efforts with a view to enhancing the role of women in the modernization and democratic revival of society and development of the State.

On 29 June 2004, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted an Ordinance on a programme of measures to ensure implementation of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 3434 dated 25 May 2004 on additional measures to support the activities of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan. By this Ordinance, they endorsed the programme of organizational and promotional measures to ensure implementation of Decree No. 3434, dated 25 May 2004 on additional measures to support the activities of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan (henceforth "programme of measures").

In order to coordinate the work of State bodies and public organizations dealing with implementation of the programme of measures and with the conduct of activities aimed at raising the effectiveness of work with women, a standing committee was established whose main tasks were defined as follows:

– To study systematically and evaluate the situation regarding the protection of women's rights and to enhance their role in the family, in society and in the building of the State;

– To elaborate and adopt measures for ensuring women's employment, provide all-round assistance in finding a job and develop various forms of female entrepreneurship;

– To ensure the implementation of regulatory acts protecting the rights and interests of women and safeguarding motherhood and childhood;

– To prepare and implement measures aimed at enhancing the social and political activities of women and at fostering the active participation of women's non-governmental and non-commercial organizations in the social and political life of the country and in the international women's movement.

In 2001, the Republic of Uzbekistan presented the initial report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. On the basis of the Committee's recommendations, a Plan of Action was prepared with a view to their implementation.

This report is the second periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and was prepared on the basis of the recommendations for the preparation of national reports and the general observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. It covers the period from January 2001 to August 2004. Materials and data used in its preparation were received from the Secretariat for the Social Protection of the Family, Mothers and Children of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Institute for Monitoring Legislation in Force attached to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Education, Health, Labour and Social Protection and Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the

Women's Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the State Television and Radio Company and the *khokimiyat* of Tashkent city.

In addition to information from governmental bodies, data from a number of NGOs were widely used in the present report, including the non-governmental Centre for the Study of Public Opinion *Ijtimoii fikr*, the Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan, the Council of the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan and the international non-governmental charitable foundation *Soglom avlod uchun*.

Part I

Strengthening of legislation to prohibit discrimination against women in the Republic of Uzbekistan (art. 1)

Since the first days of its independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan has attached great importance to enhancement of the role and improvement of the status of women in Uzbekistan. The Constitution of Uzbekistan has provisions to defend the rights of women. Article 18 prohibits all forms of discrimination related to gender, ethnicity, religion and other characteristics. Article 46 states: "Women and men shall have equal rights". Article 117 guarantees women the right to elect and be elected to representative bodies.

The State bodies of Uzbekistan carry out systematic monitoring of issues of equality and non-discrimination in accordance with the law, and in practice take specific measures where violations are established.

The Republic of Uzbekistan was the first Government in Central Asia to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on 18 December 1979, and to several other international instruments, including the International Labour Organization (ILO) Maternity Protection Convention (Revised) (Convention No. 103 of 1952) on 6 May 1993, and the Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (Convention No. 111) of 1958 on 30 August 1997, and has taken responsibility for pursuing policies that do not discriminate against women. To that end, the relevant legislation was strengthened (the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Family Code, the Labour Code, etc.) to provide for legal protection of the rights of women and the advancement of women in society.

The Government has drafted an innovative law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on State guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men and submitted it to the Parliament of Uzbekistan.

Measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan to ensure gender equality (art. 2)

The purpose of the National Plan of Action, which includes 10 priority areas to improve the health, education and employment opportunities for women, environmental protection and protection of women's rights, is to make a significant breakthrough in the advancement of women in 2005.

The implementation of the National Plan of Action has laid the ground for significant progress in achieving true equality between men and women, increasing opportunities for women, establishing a legislative and regulatory basis to resolve problems facing women and creating a national mechanism to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

A national mechanism for the advancement of women has been established in Uzbekistan at the legislative level, which has resulted in the representation of women in all branches of power. For example, women make up 9.5 per cent of the Parliament, or 23 persons, and the chairpersons of two parliamentary committees and the human rights representative of Parliament are women. A Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan are also women.

Within the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan is an Inter-Departmental Coordinating Council, consisting of representatives of ministries and departments, public associations, foundations and non-governmental organizations. The Council meets once every quarter and holds hearings on the work of State and public organizations to implement the National Plan of Action for the advancement of women in the country.

Moreover, the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan and non-governmental organizations have worked together to draft a bill on State guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men. There have been round-table discussions across Uzbekistan on its main provisions. The bill is currently before the Oliy Majlis.

Measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the advancement of women (art. 3)

Gender-equality issues are at the centre of attention of every State, public and non-governmental organization in the country. In the first years of its existence, the Republic of Uzbekistan began to pay attention to these issues. In 1998, the Institute for Monitoring Legislation in Force attached to the Oliy Majlis conducted a gender analysis of existing legislation. All newly adopted laws also undergo gender analysis. In 2004, an innovative bill on State guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men was drafted in connection with the Beijing Platform for Action. Taking into consideration the results of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the National Plan of Action, a government strategy was elaborated to implement basic gender-equality objectives.

Focused work has been done in Uzbekistan to incorporate gender equality into all areas of society along the following priority lines:

First, support of national mechanisms and NGOs in the establishment of the juridical and legislative basis to incorporate gender equality into all areas of society;

Second, a national public-awareness campaign on women's rights and freedoms;

Third, the development of a national women's movement and its integration into international movements.

The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan and the human rights representative (Ombudsman) of the Oliy Majlis have established a monitoring group to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Labour Code, the Family Code and other international and national women's rights instruments. Local analytical surveys are conducted on the outcome of the monitoring. The collected information and policy-making data are then sent to the Cabinet of Ministers.

Documents have been drafted to amend legislation in Uzbekistan concerning the prevention of violence against women.

In accordance with the Decree of the President of Uzbekistan on additional measures to support the activities of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan of 25 May 2004, the *khokimiyat* (local executive authorities) of the districts (towns) and the citizens' self-governing bodies are responsible for ensuring that positions for consultants on religious matters and spiritual and moral education are staffed by very competent women with practical experience and the ability to have a positive impact on people, especially young persons, in matters relating to inculcating a healthy lifestyle, to maintaining and developing enhanced national and religious traditions and ceremonies, and to their spiritual and moral education.

Measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan to achieve equal rights between men and women (art. 4)

Special measures are being taken in Uzbekistan to accelerate the establishment of true equality between men and women. Since 1997, government programmes have been undertaken every year with respect to a gender perspective and women's concerns. The programmes are long-term and provided with additional budgetary funds. Funding for the implementation of the programmes is also drawn from public foundations and international organizations.

The State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan has established a system of gender indicators obtained through official statistics from concurrent special sample surveys and opinion polls.

In all, there are 176 indicators in the system, reflecting the various aspects of gender development and gender equality, not including the components of any of those indicators.

The main sources of information obtained are:

1. Statistical data provided by the State, ministries, departments, businesses, institutions and organizations;
2. Sample household surveys;
3. Administrative registers of labour bodies.

The structure of the indicators of the system is based on the essential aspects of gender development.

The gender indicators are grouped by content into 11 parts, each of which contains essential aspects of gender development. The set of indicators comprises demography; health care; education and culture; economic activity; science;

standard of living; social protection; housing; law and order; government; and participation in political life.

The State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan, in cooperation with public associations and ministerial departments, and, taking into account the needs of various users, has published a series of statistical studies on the status of women and men in Uzbekistan, using a wide range of indicators that have been introduced into statistical practice.

State statistics bodies are carrying out statistical work in cooperation with other State bodies and legal persons responsible for assisting State statistics bodies in carrying out statistical work programmes.

The main users of gender statistics are:

- Political organizations: the Oliy Majlis, the Government, and regional and local administrative authorities;
- Economic organizations: ministries and departments, businesses and organizations;
- Academic and research institutions: universities, research institutes, market-research organizations and public-opinion pollsters;
- Public associations and the private sector: women's organizations, trade unions, the mass media, NGOs, businesses and citizens;
- International organizations within and outside the territory of Uzbekistan.

Questions of monitoring and promoting gender equality also fall within the mandate of the National Centre for Human Rights of Uzbekistan (founded in 1996).

The Centre is directly involved in defending the rights and interests of women and promoting a policy of gender equality. It prepares the national reports on the implementation of United Nations multilateral conventions and collaborates with all democratic national institutions and foundations as well as international organizations accredited in the country.

Measures to eliminate prejudices against women (art. 5)

In spite of the fact that the traditions and culture of modern Uzbekistan have always taught respect for women and mothers — and therefore Uzbekistan's girls have always enjoyed conditions favouring their comprehensive, harmonious physical and cultural education — the traditions and customs that are characteristic of many Muslim States have been retained in a society that has been professing Islam for a long time, even in the time of the former Soviet Union.

The basic elements of these are the following:

- Marriage without a girl's consent;
- Early marriages;
- Polygamy;
- Violation of women's reproductive rights;
- Dowry;

– Women's subordinate role in the family.

The voluntary nature of a girl's marriage contract is laid down in law in the Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 1998. Specifically, article 14 of the Code states that "marriage shall be concluded voluntarily. A marriage contract must be freely agreed to. Compulsion to conclude a marriage shall be prohibited".

Likewise, the Family Code stipulates the age qualification for entering into a marriage. Article 15 states that "the age of marriage shall be 18 years for men, and 17 years for women. If there are valid reasons or exceptional circumstances, the *khokim* of the district, city or town where the marriage is being registered may, at the request of the persons wishing to marry, reduce the age of marriage by up to one year".

With the aim of propagating the equality of women in the family, the prevention of early marriage and the prevention of violence in the family, the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan has, along with the Register Office authorities, organized a series of seminars on such subjects as "Preventing early marriages and marriages between close relations", "Optimum permissible pregnancy periods", "Reproductive health", and "Don't marry blood relations".

The legislation of Uzbekistan, which is a secular State, categorically prohibits polygamous relations between men and women. Under article 126 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, polygamy shall be punishable by deprivation of freedom of up to three years.

According to the Family Code, marriages concluded in a *nikokh* religious ceremony have no legal validity. Polygamy is prohibited under the Family Code.

The family is a traditional value in Uzbekistan, and its high standing is supported not only by State policy but also by traditional public opinion. In recent years the State has been devoting great attention to the issues of women's reproductive health and family planning. Women's reproductive rights are protected by the Constitution and the Family Code.[1]

The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, together with Uzbekistan Television and Radio (*Uzteleradiokompaniya*), produces a television programme called "School of the Young Mother", and on radio a series of programmes is being run on such subjects as "A Healthy Generation — Our Future", "The role of the family and the *makhallyas* in bringing up the younger generation", "A Healthy Way of Life", "Impediments to the creation of a healthy family".

According to sociological research conducted by the non-governmental Centre for the Study of Public Opinion *Ijtimoii fikr*, young parents today have no prejudices regarding the question of the birth of children on the basis of their sex, unlike their parents. Ideas about this have changed because of the growing authority and influence of mothers not only in the eyes of children but also in the eyes of the husband's parents, who have been increasingly siding with the woman.

Dowry — one of the hangovers from the past — is no longer a traditional attribute required of a girl before she can become someone's wife. Nowadays the payment of dowry is a purely symbolic act and to a large extent it is merely in recognition of past tradition.

[1] See annexes 1 and 2.

Measures to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women (art. 6)

The Republic of Uzbekistan is taking measures to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

The illegal migration of citizens in circumstances of economic globalization, which is taking the form of trafficking in persons, is becoming a problem for the entire global community, including Uzbekistan.

In Uzbekistan, illegal migration has appeared side by side with the legal migration of labour on the basis of contracts concluded in the Agency on questions of external labour migration of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

This kind of migration involves basically women from the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (Russian Federation, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan) and from more distant countries such as Turkey, Malaysia, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and Israel.

Many of these women have been recruited by individuals, tour operators or marriage bureaux and have been taken abroad by fraudulent means on the pretext of being offered lucrative work as waitresses, dancers, nannies, etc. Many of them are ignorant of the dangers of arriving in a foreign country, where those who have recruited them and their accomplices take their papers away, thereby depriving them of the opportunity of returning home. Finding themselves as a result completely dependent upon their so-called "employers", they are forced by the latter to engage in prostitution or they are subjected to other forms of exploitation.

Nowadays, in addition to women, under-age girls are becoming the victims of trafficking.

The law enforcement agencies are now giving the dangers of such negative phenomena their due attention and taking all measures to react in a timely manner to the potentially criminal aspects of migration and to continue with their work on the illegal "export" of people and its accompanying violations of rights.

Regulatory documents are currently being prepared on the subject, including:

1. A draft law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the fight against trafficking in persons;

2. A draft comprehensive programme on combating the recruitment and illegal smuggling of persons abroad for the purposes of sexual exploitation, which envisages a wide range of measures involving the local administrative authorities, the law enforcement agencies, concerned ministries and departments, non-governmental organizations, public associations and the mass media; the programme envisages not only preventive measures but also rehabilitation measures for the victims of trafficking.

The law enforcement organs:

1. Are, along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, examining cases of our citizens being detained abroad (between 2001 and 2003 there were more than 240 of them) and are taking preventive action;

2. Have in the past two years been carrying out regular checks on the licences and re-registration of tour operators in view of the fact that the latter have been engaging in the recruitment and illegal trafficking in persons;

3. Are conducting an active information and awareness-raising campaign in the media;

4. Are coordinating the work of State, public and non-governmental organizations and the media on the prevention of the illegal trafficking in persons;

5. Are conducting training seminars for employees of the law enforcement agencies and frontier service;

6. Are studying and making use of international experience regarding the question of combating illegal migration.

According to information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the question of ratification by the Republic of Uzbekistan of ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 has been submitted for consideration by the Secretariat for the Social Protection of the Family, Mothers and Children of the Cabinet of Ministers.

The question of ratification of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, as well as the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, has received its initial discussion and approval in the relevant departments.

Part II

Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country (art. 7)[2]

The Government of Uzbekistan is taking measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and to afford women rights on equal terms with men. Article 46 of the Constitution states: "Women and men shall have equal rights".

Women have the following rights in Uzbekistan's political and public life on equal terms with men:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referendums and to be eligible for election to all elected bodies;

(b) To participate in the formulation and implementation of governmental policy and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

The national arrangements for the promotion of gender equality and enhancement of the role of women began to see some improvement in 1995. The presidential Decree of 2 March 1995 on measures to enhance the role of women in

[2] See annexes 3 and 4.

the development of the State and public life in the Republic of Uzbekistan created the new post of Deputy Prime Minister for the Social Protection of the Family, Mothers and Children, and similar posts were established within all the regional authorities. A Secretariat for the Social Protection of the Family, Mothers and Children was established within the Cabinet of Ministers, and similar units were set up in the regional administrations. Vigorous action is being taken to improve the work in this field, as can be seen from the issuance of presidential Decree No. 3434 of 25 May 2004 on additional measures to support the activities of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, and from the adoption in June 2004 of the Ordinance of the Cabinet of Ministers on the programme of measures for implementation of the presidential Decree.

Thus, the policy of increasing the number of women at the decision-making level is being carried out from the top downwards at all levels of government.

The Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Oliy Majlis, created in 1995, also deals with women's questions. It operates under the 1997 Commissioner for Human Rights Act. The Office is an agency of Parliament and is funded by the Oliy Majlis. The legislation invests the Ombudsman with the right to propose legislative initiatives. He cooperates with all the national human rights bodies, as well as with non-governmental and international organizations and funds working to secure the realization of women's rights, the advancement of their interests, and gender equality.

A new version of the Act, considerably expanding the Ombudsman's powers, was adopted in August 2004.

The establishment and rapid development of women's NGOs marked an important stage in the growth of the women's movement in Uzbekistan. The Women's Committee actively promoted and continues to develop the network of women's NGOs. They have become a force to be reckoned with, and the joint activities of the State and non-governmental sectors have increased the sense of purpose in the raising and resolution of various problems connected with the question of women.

In recent years, women's NGOs have achieved due recognition through their actual and potential contribution to the solution of women's problems by initiating socially significant actions, conducting gender research, and collaborating effectively with foreign organizations. More than 50 women's NGOs have joined forces to create the *Mekhr* (Concern) alliance.

Women are very active in local government. In the 2003 local-government elections, 734 women were elected to the chairmanship of *Makhallyas*. There are 19,800 women advisers to *Makhallya* chairmen.

Measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan to ensure women's participation in international cooperation (art. 8)

The Government is taking a number of measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Government at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

Since 1995, Uzbekistan has been holding regular conferences and round tables on matters connected with the gender perspective and concern for women.

In the past two years alone, there have been four international conferences on the participation of women in decision-making and the advancement of gender-equality issues.

Since 1997, the Women's Committee, in conjunction with the Gender and Development Office, has been carrying out training and counselling activities in Uzbekistan for the staff of central ministries and departments and regional authorities on questions of equal rights and equality of opportunities. An effort is also being made to enhance the gender awareness of the staff of institutes of higher education, schools and colleges.

Training is also provided, with the assistance of experts from abroad, for other target groups: members of law-enforcement agencies, religious leaders, mass-media personnel and members of NGOs.

The creation of the Oliy Majlis Commission on Women's and Family Problems was approved at the first meeting of the second convocation of the Oliy Majlis on 22 January 2000. This Commission contributes to the preparation of draft legislation and collaborates with the Women's Committee, the *Oila* (Family) practical science centre, the *Soglom avlod uchun* (For a healthy generation), *Makhallya* and *Ekosan* (Environment and Health) funds, the *Kamolot* youth movement and various international organizations accredited to Uzbekistan.

Measures granting women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality (art. 9)

The State has introduced measures to grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. These rights are guaranteed by such legislation as the Nationality Act of 2 July 1992, article 1 of which states: "Everyone in the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have the right to nationality. No one may be deprived of his right to nationality or of the right to change his nationality. The Republic of Uzbekistan shall protect the rights, freedoms and interests of its nationals in the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan and abroad".

Article 6 of this Act states: "Neither the marriage of a national of the Republic of Uzbekistan to a person of foreign nationality or to a stateless person nor the dissolution of such a marriage shall entail any change in the nationality of the spouse. A change of nationality by one of the spouses shall not entail any change in the nationality of the other spouse".

Article 7 of the Act goes on to state: "A sojourn abroad by a national of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall not entail termination of his Uzbek nationality".

However, the Nationality Act does not have a separate provision on granting women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children. Articles 13 and 14 of the Act merely state that the acquisition of Uzbek nationality by a minor child is subject to the requirement that one of his or her parents is or was a national of Uzbekistan; in other words, no distinction is made between the sexes.

This question has to be addressed in the light of the provisions of the Family Code, article 71 of which states that "parents shall have equal rights and equal

responsibilities with respect to their children" until the children reach the age of majority (18 years).

Part III

Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of education (art. 10)

Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan states that "Everyone shall have the right to education. The State shall guarantee free secondary education. Schooling shall be under State supervision." Thus, the State is undertaking all necessary measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to guarantee them equal rights with men, including in the field of education, thereby ensuring their equality.

In order to maintain this standard and to improve the effectiveness of the educational system, the Republic of Uzbekistan has, even since its independence, attached great importance to the further development of the educational system, and to providing the population with all types of education and training with the guarantee of protecting the constitutional rights of citizens to an education.

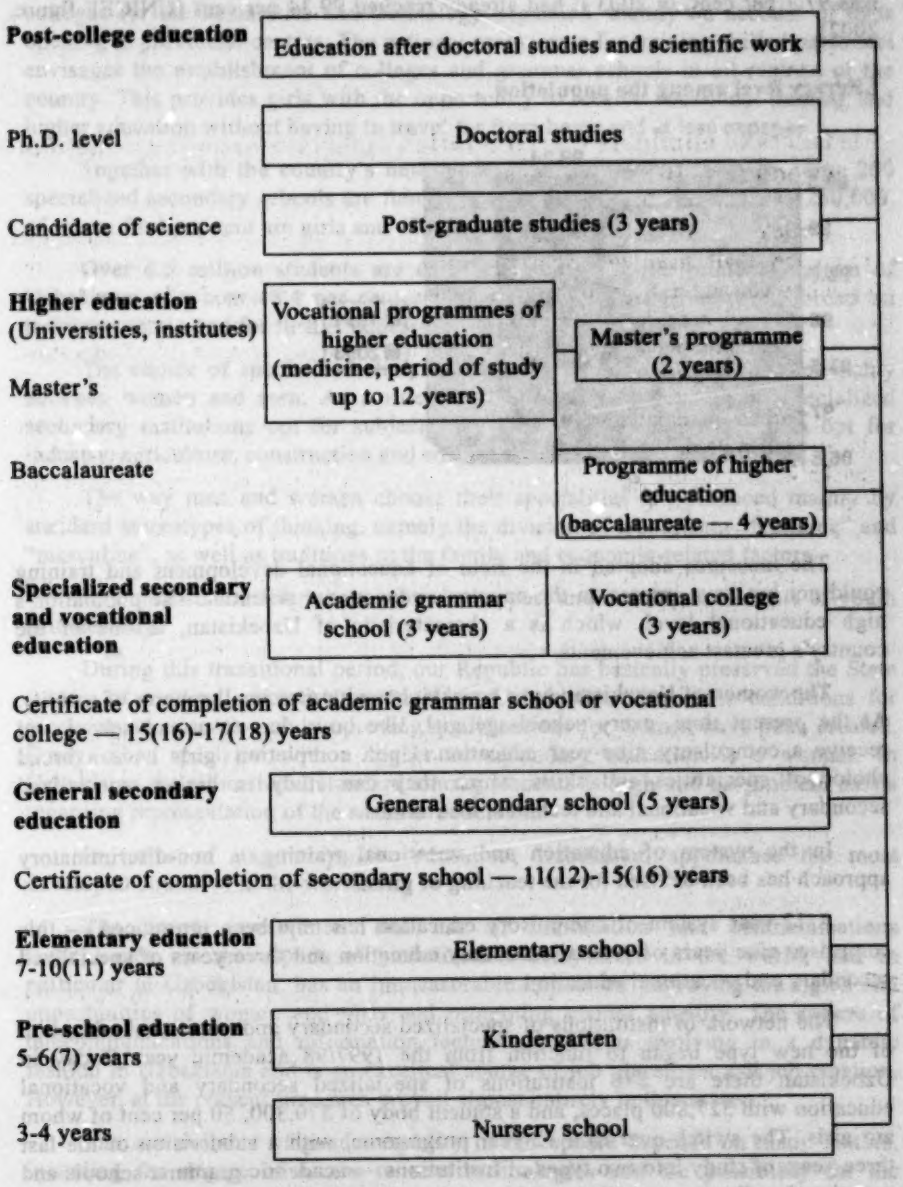
Simultaneously, a system for monitoring the observance of women's rights was created and is functioning effectively.

The State system of continuous education in Uzbekistan encompasses:

- Pre-school education for children aged 3 to 6-7 years;
- Compulsory school education: four years of elementary school, nine years of partial secondary, and two years of full secondary education which will be abolished by 2010;
- Three years of vocational or academic education;
- Higher education consisting of two stages — baccalaureate and master's programmes;
- A post-college education — post-graduate and doctoral levels.

There are also different kinds of retraining and of courses to raise the qualifications of skilled personnel after completion of their education.

System of education of the Republic of Uzbekistan

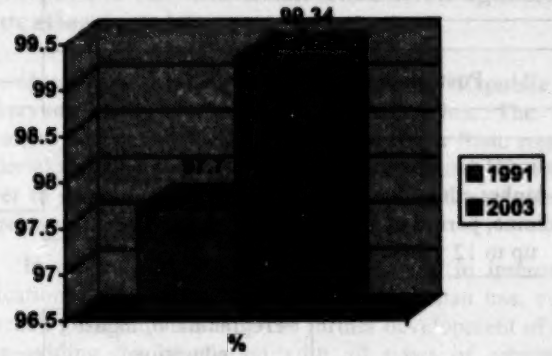

Post-college education
Education after doctoral studies and scientific work
Ph.D. level
Doctoral studies
Candidate of science
Post-graduate studies (3 years)
Higher education (Universities, institutes)
Vocational programmes of higher education (medicine, period of study up to 12 years)
Master's programme (2 years)
Master's
Baccalaureate
Programme of higher education (baccalaureate — 4 years)
Specialized secondary and vocational education
Academic grammar school (3 years)
Vocational college (3 years)
Certificate of completion of academic grammar school or vocational college — 15(16)-17(18) years
General secondary education
General secondary school (5 years)
Certificate of completion of secondary school — 11(12)-15(16) years
Elementary education 7-10(11) years
Elementary school
Pre-school education 5-6(7) years
Kindergarten
3-4 years
Nursery school

At the present time, Uzbekistan has 9,791 day-time general secondary schools, with 6,241,200 pupils, half of whom are girls.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, in accordance with the Education Act, all citizens have the right to free education and the Republic ensures that the population, including women, is fully literate. Uzbekistan is one of the few developing countries whose population is almost fully literate and whose indices are

continuing to rise. Whereas in 1991 the literacy rate of the population of Uzbekistan was 97.7 per cent, in 2003 it had already reached 99.34 per cent (UNICEF figure, 2002).

Literacy level among the population



The measures adopted in the field of educational development and training could not but have impact on the country's educational potential. The population's high educational level, which is a characteristic of Uzbekistan, is one of the country's greatest achievements.

The women of Uzbekistan have equal rights with men in all spheres of activity. At the present time, every school-age girl, like boys, has to attend school and receive a compulsory nine-year education. Upon completion, girls have a broad choice of specialities and skills which they can study in higher, specialized secondary and vocational and technical institutions.

In the system of education and vocational training, a non-discriminatory approach has been devised for the teaching of girls.

A 12-year system of compulsory education has now been introduced — this comprises nine years of general secondary education and three years of specialized secondary and vocational education.

The network of institutions of specialized secondary and vocational education of the new type began to function from the 1997/98 academic year. Today in Uzbekistan there are 846 institutions of specialized secondary and vocational education with 527,800 places, and a student body of 570,300, 50 per cent of whom are girls. The switch-over to a 12-year programme, with a subdivision of the last three years of study into two types of institutions — academic grammar schools and vocational colleges — will provide a full range of study for those completing grade 9.

A large network of organizations and institutes to raise qualifications, as well as to train and retrain specialists, is also envisaged, thereby guaranteeing women assistance in their education throughout their lives.

Secondary education is provided in two stages of instruction in general secondary school: elementary (grades 1 to 4) and general secondary (grades 5 to 9).

During the years of Uzbekistan's independent development, the network of colleges for the humanities and technology expanded, mainly on account of their opening in provincial centres. The national programme for training skilled personnel envisages the establishment of colleges and grammar schools in all regions of the country. This provides girls with the opportunity to receive vocational training and higher education without having to travel far from home and at less expense.

Together with the country's new types of institutions of learning, some 200 specialized secondary schools are functioning with a student body of over 250,000, of whom 52.4 per cent are girls and 47.6 per cent are boys.

Over 6.5 million students are enrolled in the entire educational system of Uzbekistan of whom 48.4 per cent are women, some of whom travel abroad on training courses and for further education.

The choice of specialized study in institutions of learning differs noticeably between women and men. As a rule, female students in higher and specialized secondary institutions opt for subjects like education, health, while men opt for industry, agriculture, construction and education.

The way men and women choose their specialities is influenced mainly by standard stereotypes of thinking, namely the division of labour into "feminine" and "masculine", as well as traditions in the family and economic-related factors.

In Uzbekistan a determined effort to support and develop the talents of youth is under way.

During this transitional period, our Republic has basically preserved the State system of training specialist personnel. In Uzbekistan, favourable conditions for receiving an education and improving qualifications for women have been created. Every other specialist with a higher or secondary education is a woman. In Uzbekistan the educational standard among students is high and no problem exists regarding representation of the sexes in education.

In terms of its outlays for education, Uzbekistan approaches the most developed countries in the world.

The broad development and use of information and communications technologies as one aspect of globalization everywhere in the world, and in particular in Uzbekistan, has an immeasurable impact on improving the rights and opportunities of women and girls and promoting gender equality. The sphere of telecommunications and information technology (IT) is evolving in a dynamic fashion in Uzbekistan and is an excellent source of job placement and job creation. However, at the present time men prevail almost entirely in this sector.

The achievement of gender equality in this sphere depends on many factors, including the degree of access to new technologies and the possibility for the advancement of women. One of the solutions to this problem is the creation of a core institute for women to study information and communications technology.

A new centre attached to the Tashkent University of Information Technology has been opened to train women in the field of telecommunications, information technology, e-government, e-commerce and such areas. This will allow them to obtain good jobs and improve their living conditions. A separate specialized lecture-hall is also open to women college graduates who are seeking specialized

instruction. Over 500 women a year will study in the centre and gradually the numbers will increase.

The opening of branches in the regions is planned, and in this way women from Central Asia, not just from Uzbekistan, will be able to study.

Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment (art. 11)[3]

The State is taking all necessary measures to abolish discrimination against women in employment in order to guarantee equal rights between men and women. Article 37 of the Constitution of Uzbekistan states that "Everyone shall have the right to work, to choose one's occupation freely, to enjoy fair conditions of work and to be protected from unemployment in accordance with the procedure established by law."

The laws of Uzbekistan guarantee women the right to work on an equal basis with men, the right to choose an occupation freely, the right to social protection upon retirement and the right to unemployment, health and disability benefits.

The participation of men and women in the economy of Uzbekistan at the outset of the new century was 44 per cent and 56 per cent respectively. The level of female economic activity on the whole is lower than among men. Traditional spheres of job applications for women are education, health, culture, art, science and scientific service (the participation of women is between 70 and 86 per cent).

The Republic of Uzbekistan is working to broaden the opportunities of the population for working in developing countries. Currently the Agency for the External Migration of Labour is actively cooperating with the Republic of Korea in devising training courses and job placements in that country. This allows the youth of Uzbekistan to receive decent, productive work, while a programme for providing youth employment has been prepared and is being implemented by the youth movement Kamolot, together with the regional authorities.

The Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan *Tadbirkor ayol* is running a series of training courses; including "How to launch one's own business", "How to devise a business plan". "The fundamentals of marketing", "Woman and society", "Small and medium-sized business", "Women and their rights" and "Gender development", aimed at developing female entrepreneurship. Over 6,500 women were enrolled in the training as a result of which over 1,000 women launched their own business. Over 3,000 women participated in training programmes aimed at developing local handicrafts and cottage industries. As a result, in 2004 1,986 women founded home-based businesses and 1,276 established private firms.

At the outset of 2004, over 5 million women comprising 121 women's business associations were employed in small and medium-sized businesses.

Every year in Uzbekistan, around 400,000 new jobs become available, over 40 per cent of which are assigned to and occupied by women.

[3] See annex 5.

Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care (art. 12)

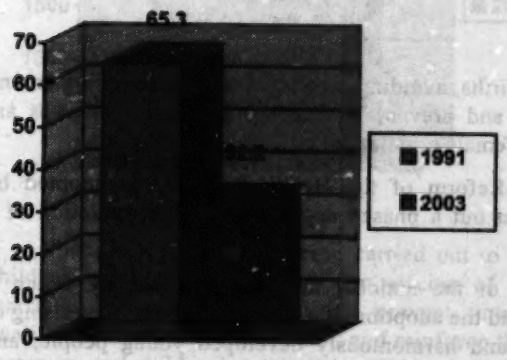
The State takes all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health-care services and women's active involvement in family planning matters.

The 1993 Ordinance of the Cabinet of Ministers on the comprehensive solution of problems connected with improvement of the health of young people set out the priorities for the integration of the components of the reproductive-health services into a network of primary-health-care institutions. These provisions were further reinforced in two other Ordinances of the Cabinet of Ministers: No. 32 on additional measures to improve the health of women and young people, adopted on 25 January 2002; and No. 242 on measures for implementation of the priorities for enhancing a culture of health in the family, improvement of women's health, and the production and upbringing of healthy children, adopted on 5 July 2002. The implementation of the latter is monitored every quarter by a Deputy Prime Minister with the assistance of the relevant ministries, departments, public organizations and heads of the regional authorities.

The budgetary appropriations for the programme for the development of a culture of health and improvement of women's health have increased every year since 1997. For example, the 2002-2007 expenditure from all sources of financing on just one programme of the Cabinet of Ministers (Ordinance No. 242 on measures for implementation of the priorities in enhancing a culture of health in the family, improvement of women's health, and the production and upbringing of healthy children, adopted on 5 July 2002) totals 95 billion sum, or US$ 122 million.

As a result of the efforts made, the country's maternal-mortality rate fell from 65.3 per 100,000 live births in 1991 to 32.2 in 2003.

Reduction of maternal mortality



The reduction of maternal mortality to the 2003 level was achieved as a result of the work done on:

– Improving the system for the protection of women's health;

– Expanding the system of continuous training and upgrading the qualifications of specialist personnel and the people's knowledge of matters connected with the improvement of women's health;

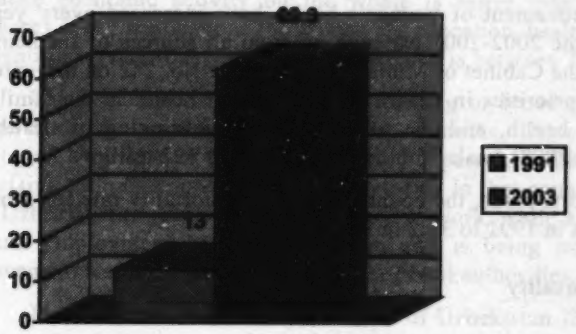
– Extending the coverage and improving the work of the primary-health-care institutions and the reproductive-health centres for women, girls and adolescents, and equipping them with audiovisual materials and visual aids for educational purposes;

– Establishing centres providing training in the methodology of the reproductive health of women, girls and adolescents;

– Identifying extragenital diseases in women and improving the availability of contraceptive devices;

– Providing the public with contraceptive devices free of charge (13 per cent of women were using contraception in 1991; this figure had risen to 62.3 per cent by 2003).

Use of contraceptive devices



The advantages of spacing births, avoiding pregnancy and childbearing among adolescents and elderly women, and preventing frequent and multiple births are vigorously publicized among the female population.

The State Programme for Reform of the Health System was adopted by presidential decree in 1998; it set out a phased approach to the formulation of a national model of health care.

One distinguishing feature of the national model is the priority which it attaches to preventive medicine and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle, the raising of physically and morally healthy and harmoniously developed young people, and enhancement of the people's awareness of their responsibility for their own health.

The State Programme takes the country's medical, social, economic and environmental circumstances into account and is based on the principle of a phased

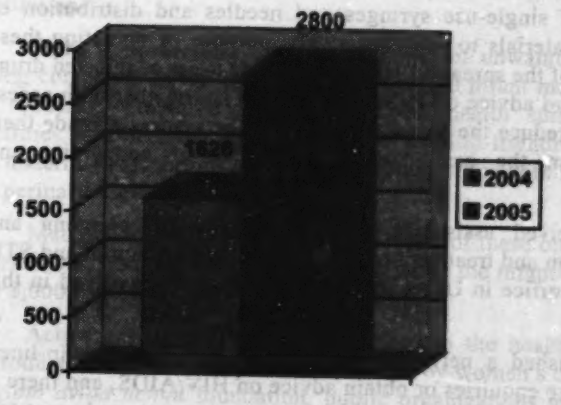
transition from State to joint and private sources of financing for health care and on the creation of the conditions for the people's social protection.

The State Programme identifies a number of priority actions requiring urgent implementation. These actions are the reform of the primary link in the provision of medical care, the establishment of an effective State-backed system of emergency medical treatment, the improvement of the arrangements for funding health care, the creation of a sustainable and competitive non-State health sector, the introduction of stable arrangements for dealing with epidemiological problems in all regions of the country, and the further improvement of the health care of mothers and children.

In implementation of the State Programme the Ministry of Health is restructuring the network of health care facilities. In place of the old and cumbersome five-tier system, the Ministry is establishing a two-tier system of primary health care consisting of rural health posts and central district hospitals.

This rationalization is being achieved by replacing the old, inefficient rural district hospitals and outpatients and midwifery units with a modern means of providing primary health care — the rural health post staffed by a general practitioner. In recent years Uzbekistan has built and equipped 857 such posts. A further 769 were established by reconstructing existing medical facilities. There are now 1,626 posts in operation. It is anticipated that a total of 2,800 posts will be functioning by 2005; they are being furnished with the necessary medical equipment for providing a broad range of services.

Numbers of rural health posts



Specific measures are being carried out to improve the health of women of childbearing age, secure the wider spacing of births, deter early marriage and marriage between close relatives, prevent unwanted pregnancies, upgrade the qualifications of health personnel, and reinforce the materials and technical base of maternity and children's institutions. This work is proceeding in three areas:

1. Improvement of the moral, physical and medical education of girls for their future family life;

2. Advocacy of the idea that healthy young people are found only in healthy families;

3. Emphasis of the responsibility of health workers for improving maternal health during pregnancy and childbirth.

The education system devotes special attention to the prevention of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and other diseases in order to protect the country's young people against harmful habits and serious illnesses.

Ordinance No. 32 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 25 January 2002 on additional measures to improve the health of women and young people prescribed the introduction of the subject "Health" into the curricula of the country's schools for pupils in grades 1 to 4, "Foundations of a healthy younger generation" for grades 5 to 9, and "Foundations of a healthy lifestyle and family" for grades 10 and 11; information and methodological materials were produced with the help of international organizations. Mass events and campaigns are also held for students in the senior grades in connection with the International Day against Drug Abuse and World AIDS Day.

The National Programme to Combat HIV/AIDS 2002-2006 was adopted on 19 June 2002. A joint project entitled "Promotion of an effective multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS, drug addiction and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Uzbekistan" is being carried out.

The country's main policy for combating the spread of HIV infection is based on the implementation of preventive measures among users of injected drugs. Uzbekistan has now re-opened and is operating more than 230 confidential help centres for the exchange of single-use syringes and needles and distribution of condoms and information materials to such users. The purpose of operating these centres is to reduce the rate of the spread of HIV and provide users of injected drugs with access to information and advice on HIV/AIDS and STIs, together with access to medical facilities, and to reduce the demand for drugs. The centres provide their services free of charge on the basis of the principles of anonymity and confidentiality.

The Government received assistance in the coordination, planning and management of the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, drug addiction and STIs from UNAIDS; the UNFPA office in Uzbekistan was also actively involved in this work.

Uzbekistan has established a network of confidential telephone help-lines, which people can use to make enquiries or obtain advice on HIV/AIDS, and there is also a network of confidential offices providing direct pre-test and post-test consultations. The Internet programmes on this problem are continuing to expand, but they have so far not reached a large audience because there are so few information technology networks in the regions. There are a few officially registered web sites dealing with HIV/AIDS.

In the effort to improve the epidemiological monitoring of malaria in Uzbekistan, special emphasis is given to prevention of the transmission of tropical malaria and reduction of the transmission of three-day malaria in the southern areas bordering on Tajikistan by boosting the human resources capacity and upgrading the

material and technical base of the parasitology service and securing the involvement of donor organizations in the anti-malaria measures.

The improvement of the epidemiological monitoring of all the infectious diseases recorded in these areas and of exotic diseases which may be carried in from other States is helping to reduce the morbidity and mortality rates in all age groups.

Uzbekistan also gives priority to questions of the reproductive rights and reproductive health of women. The protection of the health of mothers and children is a very important indicator of a country's level of social and economic well-being. Moreover, the preservation of the gene pool depends primarily on the health of women/mothers. Uzbekistan is fairly advanced in this area with respect to the provision of facilities and equipment. It has midwifery/gynaecological and paediatric services and research institutes of midwifery/gynaecology, paediatrics, hygiene, and industrial diseases.

Marriage and family centres, screening centres and medical-genetics centres have recently been opened in all regions of the country. Comprehensive State programmes for improving the health of women of childbearing age have been formulated and are being carried out. The following are the main areas addressed by these programmes: improvement of the system for the protection of the people's reproductive health; screening of mothers and children; development of the system of continuous training; upgrading the qualifications of specialists and the people's knowledge of the protection of reproductive health; enhancement of the culture of health; expansion of international cooperation for the improvement of women's reproductive health and the production and upbringing of children; and reinforcement of the materials and technological base of children's and maternity institutions.

Work is proceeding on the prevention of unwanted pregnancies. Studies are being conducted of the causes of maternal and infant mortality and the possibilities of rendering practical assistance to local health authorities. Sixteen maternity facilities have been certified by UNICEF as child-friendly hospitals, and the work of all maternity institutions has been brought into line with the WHO recommendations on perinatal care.

Maternal mortality has fallen as a result of these ongoing efforts; on 1 January 2004 it was 32.2 per 100,000 live births, while the infant-mortality rate stood at 16.3 per 1,000 live births.

Active assistance has been furnished to the health authorities in matters of reproductive rights and reproductive health by women's committees at all levels, the *Soglom avlod uchun* foundation, public organizations and women's NGOs, which carry out vigorous information and education activities among women to consolidate the people's exercise of its reproductive rights, with special attention given to the development of child-friendly reproductive health services.

Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the economic and social spheres (art. 13)

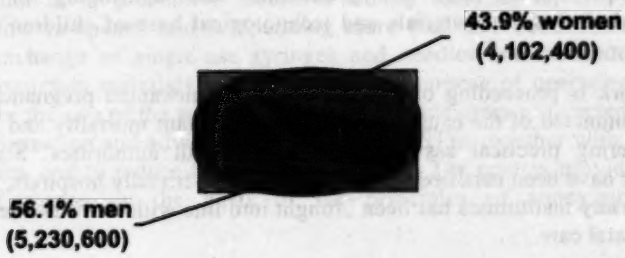
Women's economic and social rights are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (chap. 9, arts. 36-42), the Labour Code (art. 6), the Code on Administrative Responsibility (art. 3) and other regulatory instruments.

All relevant measures are being taken by the State to eliminate discrimination against women in economic and social life in order to secure for them equal rights with men.

An active role is now being played by the Government of Uzbekistan, the UNDP Mission in Uzbekistan, and interested ministries, departments and organizations in completing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) country programme for Uzbekistan for 2005-2009. This document is based on the priorities set in the Millennium Development Goals and linked to the priority activities for Uzbekistan's development over the next few years. The document, compiled with the assistance of international financial institutions, envisages reducing the proportion of the population consuming less than 2,100 kilocalories per day from 27.5 per cent in 2002 to 17 per cent by 2015.

A State economic policy has been formulated in Uzbekistan which will have a positive effect on the employment and incomes of working women. Women are now widely employed in the country's enterprises, farms and organizations. According to figures from the State Statistics Committee, as of 1 January 2004 the country's economy was employing 9,333,000 persons, 43.9 per cent of whom (4,102,400) were women. Compared with the previous year, the country's working population as a whole had increased by 2.2 per cent, and the employment of women had increased by 2.1 per cent.

Employment of women in the economic sector



As a result, women now make up more than 45 per cent of the country's total active labour resources. Women work in all the leading branches of production such as light industry, agriculture, transport, construction, communications, education, health care, culture and sport.

The State devotes constant attention to this question, and legal guarantees have been set in place for the social protection of mothers and working women in the workplace and in their daily lives. All these guarantees are embodied in provisions of the Labour Code, presidential decrees and other regulatory acts.

In 2003, in the Republic of Uzbekistan as a whole, 45.9 per cent of persons handled by employment bureaux were women — 197,700 out of a total of 430,500 — and of these 139,100 were placed in jobs in various sectors of the economy.

The regulations for the loads women are allowed to lift or move by hand have been revised; a list has been drawn up of jobs with unpleasant working conditions in which it is prohibited to employ women; and social protection is provided for pregnant women and women with children.

The government programme for the social protection of women at work devotes great attention to issues relating to improving the skills and qualifications of women workers, creating the necessary working conditions for women, and providing them with opportunities to leave jobs in which the working conditions involve factors injurious or dangerous to their health.

In spite of the measures taken, there are still cases of women being engaged in hard physical labour, particularly in rural areas, where their working conditions need to be improved significantly.

In recent years there have been special developments in women's entrepreneurship, mainly in consumer-goods production and the provision of services. Unfortunately, there is still too small a proportion of women among the ranks of entrepreneurs. According to statistics from the Chamber of Entrepreneurs and Producers of Uzbekistan, the proportion of women involved in small and personal entrepreneurship is about 23 per cent, the proportion of under-25s is about 30 per cent, including 9 per cent who are over 18.

One of the basic principles underpinning the general reform strategy in Uzbekistan in the present period of transition is a strong social policy and social protection.

Since 1994 the system of social assistance in Uzbekistan has been undergoing serious changes linked to the transition from comprehensive social protection to the provision of reliable social guarantees and support for the most vulnerable strata of the population.

Currently, social assistance is being provided to the population through two major programmes: one for families with children and another for families with insufficient means. In order better to target social assistance and reduce the administrative expenditure connected with its provision, a decision has been adopted in Uzbekistan which is without parallel anywhere in the world. Since 1994, with the programme of assistance to families with insufficient means, and since 1997, with the programme of assistance to families with children, resources have been provided from the budget and distributed by the local self-government bodies, the *makhallyas*. For example, every year, as a result of collective contracts and agreements throughout the Republic of Uzbekistan:

- More than 600,000 women get supplementary leave;
- Forty thousand women get one to two months' extension of the legally prescribed period of pregnancy and maternity leave at their employers' expense;
- Two hundred thousand women with large families and children under school age work a shorter day and are in receipt of material assistance;
- More than 40,000 women who are off work because they have to look after children of two to three years of age are in receipt of material assistance (State benefit is paid only until a child is two);

– Women with children under the age of three who are working in budget-funded organizations are afforded the right under the country's legislation to a reduction of one hour in the length of their working week.

Some 100,000 women working in the non-State sector are now enjoying that right through collective contracts and agreements.

There are standards in Uzbek legislation which give certain categories of women special social and labour guarantees. They include, for example, restricting the employment of women in working conditions injurious and especially injurious to them; pensionable retirement at 50 for women with five children; a voluntary early-retirement option for women at 54.

There are about one million women in the Republic of Uzbekistan who are either pensioners or disabled and are the subject of constant attention and concern by the State.

Measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the Convention to women in rural areas (art. 14)

The State takes into consideration the special problems faced by women in rural areas. The important role they play in ensuring the economic well-being of their families, including their activities in the non-market branches of the economy, are taken into account. Appropriate measures are taken to ensure application of the provisions of the Convention to women in rural areas.

In 1997 the Government adopted a decision on the creation of a National Commission for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Ordinance of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 510 of 12 November 1997).

The Concept of Sustainable Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan was elaborated in 1998 and the National Sustainable Development Strategy in 1999, both of them being approved by the Government. The bases of Agenda 21 for the Republic of Uzbekistan were elaborated in 2000. The basic programmes have been determined, and their development and implementation will further the creation of the socio-economic conditions for the transition to sustainability.

Part IV

Equality of women and men before the law (art. 15)

The State accords to women with men before the law. This is established in article 18 of the Constitution of Uzbekistan and in articles 3 and 5 of the Criminal Code. Article 2 of the Nationality Act states that: "Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall be equal before the law, irrespective of birth, social or property status, race or nationality, gender, educational level, language, religious persuasion, political and other convictions, type and nature of occupation, and other circumstances. Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall be guaranteed equality in all spheres of economic, political, social and cultural life."

The State accords to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, women

are given equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and are treated equally in all stages of procedure in courts.

The results of sociological research undertaken by the non-governmental Centre for the Study of Public Opinion *Ijtimoii fikr* confirm this situation. To elucidate how Uzbek women assess their legal status, the question was asked: "Do you believe that women have equal rights with men in our society?" The majority (72 per cent) of women replied in the affirmative. But almost one fifth (19.2 per cent) had the exact opposite opinion, and said: "Women in our society do not have equal rights with men." Those who had difficulty in answering the question (8.8 per cent) almost coincided with this group.

Women's opinion on gender equality

Among those who noted the absence of equality with men, more urban dwellers (22.2 per cent) than rural inhabitants (16.4 per cent) did so. Women of Slavic nationality (41.7 per cent) were found to be socially very assertive. Moreover, every other Slavic woman believes that society observes equality. It is noteworthy that teenage girls are more critical in evaluating women's rights. More than a quarter of respondents in the age category 16-20 pointed to gender inequality (27.6 per cent).

The research revealed the positive correlation between a respondent's educational level and the assertion that social equality existed. The higher a woman's educational level the more positive was her assessment of equality. Thus 68.8 per cent of women with partial secondary education, 70.5 per cent with specialized secondary education, 70.8 per cent with partial higher education and 77.7 per cent with higher education said that women in Uzbek society had equal rights with men.

In that regard, every year the Government, internal-affairs bodies and the Procurator-General of the Republic study the extent to which laws governing the rights of women are being respected, and subsequently the collated material is discussed at a coordination meeting of law enforcement bodies. The analysis of materials shows that in all the regions the Procurator-General's offices, together with public and non-governmental organizations and local self-governing bodies, are undertaking comprehensive measures to restore women's rights, if instances of

discrimination had occurred. The number of criminal cases brought against perpetrators of violent acts against women increased by 43.6 per cent in 2003 compared with 2002.

In respect of criminal cases in this category brought to trial, every third person found guilty was sentenced to deprivation of liberty.

Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in matters relating to marriage and family relations (art. 16)

The State is taking all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations. Thus, on 30 April 1998 the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted the Family Code, which constitutes the basic family law. Its tasks are: to strengthen the family and to build family relationships based on mutual love, trust and mutual respect, cooperation and mutual help, on the responsibility of every member vis-à-vis the family as a whole, on the inadmissibility of a person's arbitrary interference in family matters, and on the full guarantee to family members of their rights and of their protection.

However, as before, several problems exist.

According to the results of the poll undertaken by the non-governmental Centre for the Study of Public Opinion *Ijtimoii fikr*, the principal reason for inequality is the nature of relations between the sexes, or gender-role stereotypes, together with economic reasons. To the question: "If you think that in our society a woman does not have equal rights, how does this manifest itself?", the following answers were received:

Reasons	*Town*	*Village*	*Total*
Women are materially dependent on men	7.0	1.4	4.5
Men consider themselves head of the family	54.7	61.4	57.7
Women consider themselves inferior to men in all respects	5.8	5.7	5.8
Women have to work more than men	4.7	4.3	4.5
Men occupy higher positions and accordingly receive more pay	1.2	2.9	1.9
Women encounter ill-will in hiring and promotions	9.3	10.0	9.6
Other	3.7	2.9	3.9
Had difficulty in answering	14.0	11.4	12.8

Evidently, women suffer from persisting stereotypes — men have more rights because they dominate in all spheres, while women have lower-status jobs and are materially dependent on men.

The results of the poll demonstrate that, notwithstanding legal-type measures adopted by the country's leaders, there is a lack of real mechanisms to fully involve women in the economy and to protect their interests in society. Moreover, among women themselves — and this is especially characteristic of rural women — mental inertia persists regarding the dominant role of men in the family and society.

Conclusion

In this transitional period, notwithstanding certain economic difficulties and the tense geopolitical situation in the region, Uzbekistan devoted, and continues to devote, particular attention to women's issues, to changing the stereotypes of women from protectors of the domestic hearth to women as full-fledged members of the country's political and social life and open civil society.

For Uzbekistan, with its many millions of people and the preponderance of women in its make-up, a particular characteristic is the impressive leap in the development of women's NGOs and their active inclusion in democratic transformations and dialogue with the Government, as well as women's active involvement in entrepreneurial activity. The establishment of the *Mekhr* women's association and the Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan bear witness to this.

At the same time the State, as in all the years of independence, continues to be the main engine of democratic transformation. In that regard, the enormous role in attaining true gender equality and entering into a dialogue with the institutions of civil society undoubtedly rests with the Government, and especially the Social Protection of the Family, Mothers and Children Complex and the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan's Plan of Action for fulfilling the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was elaborated at the initiative of these two organizations. A great deal of work is being done so that the status of girls and women can genuinely improve. In this regard, one of the priority areas is the spiritual, cultural and physical development of women. Meetings with creative intellectuals take place, as do visits to historical sites and monuments; the number of books in the stocks of rural libraries is growing; courses are being held to improve women's knowledge of the law; and constant attention is being given to broadening the outlook of young and teenage girls and women. With this goal in mind, competitions, public showings, quizzes, festivals and other events are organized to harness women's creative potential.

In recent years, the organs of central and local government and NGOs have accorded the prevention of violence against women an important place in their activities. They are included in the National Plan of Action for improving the status of women in Uzbekistan, and comprise one of its 10 priorities. State organizations, together with public, non-governmental and international organizations, hold seminars, round tables, conferences and meetings on the subject of raising women's knowledge of the laws and increasing gender awareness in civil society on issues of violence against women.

As a way of preventing violence against women, telephone-support lines and crisis centres have been established in the provincial centres and towns.

In 2000, a United Nations Development Fund for Women programme was started in order to make certain target groups — youth, women, workers in the media and law enforcement, religious activists and other groups — better informed on issues of preventing violence against women.

These and other issues of violation of women's rights have become the subject of special investigations by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Thus, in 2003 there

were recorded 42 cases of polygamy, 228 cases of domestically-related premeditated murder, 576 cases of rape, 78 instances of persons being driven to suicide, and 27 instances of women being forced into marriage or being prevented from marrying.

The Government, as a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, is continuing to increase its efforts to enhance the role of women in Uzbekistan's social and political life and to protect their rights and interests. Evidence of this lies in the fact that the Government is currently studying the question of acceding to the Optional Protocol to the Convention, and also that an addendum laying down a 30-per-cent quota for women nominated as candidates from political parties to government posts is being prepared for inclusion in the country's election law.

Annex 1

Women's state of health according to a 2001 sample survey of women, in percentages

		Including	
	Total	*Urban population*	*Rural population*
Women not experiencing any problems	70.5	57.2	80.3
Women experiencing intermittent health problems	20.9	29.6	14.4
Women experiencing constant health problems	5.2	8.0	3.2
Women with chronic illnesses	3.0	5.0	1.5
Other	0.4	0.2	0.6
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Annex 2

Maternal mortality

1993	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*
Total number of women who died from complications during pregnancy, delivery and the post-partum period								
360.0	289.0	253.0	219.0	132.0	174.0	158.0	170.0	182.0
Per 100,000 live births								
51.0	40.6	38.6	32.2	20.7	28.5	28.6	31.2	34.5

Data of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Annex 3

Composition of State administrative bodies as of 1 January 2002

			Gender distribution as a percentage of the total	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
In legislative and representative bodies (deputies)	64.1	72.6	12.3	87.7
Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan	1.9	2.8	9.9	90.1
Zhokargi Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	0.6	1.1	8.0	92.0
Councils of People's Deputies of the regions and Tashkent	4.7	8.0	8.5	91.5
District councils of people's deputies	46.7	51.0	12.7	87.3
In executive bodies (senior officials)	20.0	17.5	15.3	84.7
Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan	0.2	0.1	16.7	83.3
Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	0.1	0.1	12.5	87.5
Khokims and deputy khokims of regions and Tashkent	1.1	1.3	11.9	88.1
Khokims and deputy khokims of districts	16.0	13.9	15.4	84.6
Khokims and deputy khokims of cities	2.6	2.1	16.3	83.7
In judicial bodies (judges)	15.9	9.9	20.3	79.7
Constitutional Court	0.1	0.1	20.0	80.0
Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan	0.5	0.5	14.6	85.4
Supreme Court of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regional courts, Tashkent city court	4.7	2.9	20.4	79.6
District and city courts	8.1	5.0	20.4	79.6
Higher Economic Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan	0.2	0.2	15.8	84.2
Economic courts of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and regions	2.3	1.2	22.6	77.4
Total in State administrative bodies	**100.0**	**100.0**	**13.7**	**86.3**

Annex 4

Membership in political parties in the Republic of Uzbekistan as of 1 January 2002

	Gender distribution in percentage points	
	Women	*Men*
People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan	**30.5**	**69.5**
"Adolat" Social Democratic Party of Uzbekistan	**36.2**	**63.8**
"Fidokorlar" National Democratic Party	**15.6**	**84.4**
"Milly Tiklanish" Democratic National Rebirth Party	**27.3**	**72.7**

Annex 5

Number of men and women employed in managerial positions by branch of economic activity as of 1 January 2001

	Number of managers		*Percentage of the total*		*Distribution by gender in percentage points*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Industry	8 407	30 056	17.1	19.7	21.9	78.1
Agriculture and forestry	1 201	16 541	2.4	10.8	6.8	93.2
Transport	1 166	7 317	2.4	4.8	13.7	86.3
Communications	874	2 357	1.8	1.5	27.1	72.9
Construction	2 875	12 845	5.8	8.4	18.3	81.7
Trade, catering, engineering, procurement	2 719	9 986	5.5	6.5	21.4	78.6
Housing and consumer services	1 314	5 666	2.7	3.7	18.8	81.2
Health, physical education, sport, social services	2 571	6 006	5.2	3.9	30.0	70.0
Education	20 919	33 190	42.5	21.8	38.7	61.3
Art and culture	1 448	2 237	3.0	1.6	39.3	60.7
Science and academic research	782	1 913	1.6	1.3	29.0	71.0
Finance, credit, insurance	1 335	3 504	2.7	2.3	27.6	72.4
Management	3 068	18 576	6.2	12.2	14.2	85.8
Other branches	546	2 279	1.1	.15	19.3	80.7
Total	**49 225**	**152 473**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**24.4**	**75.6**